

# THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



HOW I WAS DECEIVED TO SCHOOL.

## AN OLD SAILOR'S STORY

CHAPTER V.—A LITTLE BUSINESS IN THE KIDNAPPING WAY.

MORE than three months had passed away, and my mother and I were alone in our desolate home. My poor mother was very much altered in appearance. Her dress was deep mourning, and a widow's cap shadowing her pale face showed the extent of her loss, and of mine also. Grief had set its

mark upon her countenance; but its violence had abated.

Since that dark night ride of which I have written, many events had taken place tending to clear up the mysteries which had so long surrounded me. I not only knew now that my father had been a smuggler, but I understood better what the word meant. I had discovered also that his whole property had been embarked in the contra-

band trade. I suppose that my ideas of honesty must have been very imperfect at that time; for when it was explained to me that the cutter my father had commanded was partly his own property, and that the goods he had been in the habit of fetching from France or Holland, as the case might be, were honestly paid for there, to be sold again for a profit in England, I was at a loss to understand that there was anything to be ashamed of in the transaction. Indeed, I thought that the charge of dishonesty lay against those who attempted to deprive the poor freetraders of their goods against their will. I have learned a different lesson since then.

Setting this aside, however, I had discovered—or it had been hinted to me—that the visits of Mr. Whistlercraft, the doctor, and Mr. Greyling, the draper, to my poor father, had sprung from other motives than those I had been accustomed to suppose; the fact being that they had a deep and pecuniary interest in the occasional trips of the “Sally”—for so the smuggling cutter was named. They were joint, though secret, owners of the vessel, and partners in the cargoes brought over.

Furthermore, I had learnt that the last unfortunate trip of the smuggling cutter, and the unhappy fate of my poor father, were due to the treachery of Peggy Crosskeys, who, already deep in the secrets of his avocations, had by listening learned the particulars of that last adventure, and had given information accordingly. My poor father little knew what a spy he had so long harboured under his roof.

But the treason had prospered, and Peggy was rewarded accordingly. She had left the village—this was one comfort to my mother—and was reported to be revelling in the enjoyment of her ill-gotten gains, in an inland town, some miles away. I afterwards learned—and I must confess that I rejoiced when I heard it—that the money she had received soon vanished, and that for years (until the date of her death, indeed) she was an inmate of a parish workhouse, and branded with infamy by the meanest paupers.

Of the skirmish, or rather the fight, which ended so disastrously for my father, it is sufficient to say that many were desperately wounded on both sides, and some mortally, and that a great part of the valuable cargo was seized by the custom-house officers and confiscated. On the other hand, however, the cutter and a part of her crew, and some unlanded goods, got clear off the coast without capture; while the smugglers engaged in the desperate conflict succeeded in escaping being made prisoners, partly owing to the necessity, or the desirableness presented to the victorious party, of securing the goods they had captured. It was thus that my poor father and his wounded comrades had been enabled to reach their hiding-place. Subsequently, rewards were offered by Government for the apprehension of the smugglers, especially of my father, whose name appeared prominently on the widely-spread proclamations; but without effect. Those who knew of the existence of “The Hide” were few in number, probably; but, few or many, they were faithful.

Meanwhile, however, my poor mother had been terrified by the visits of custom-house officers, who, without much sympathy or delicacy, searched the house from cellar to attic, and examined every out-house and square yard of garden ground, either for smuggled goods or concealed smugglers; and, though they were disappointed in these expectations, it was known that so close a watch was kept over my mother's movements, that she never again could visit her husband in his hiding-place; and the tidings which clothed her in the garb of a widow reached her through the agency of a strolling gipsy, who, under pretence of having matches and tin-ware to sell, gained access to our house, and slipped a letter into my mother's hand.

Another person had also been at our house; this was my grandfather. His visit was short, and distressing to my mother. I never knew the particulars of that interview; but I believe that the object of Mr. Clayton—this was the gentleman's name—was to urge his widowed daughter to return to her former home, with a promise of support for herself and her orphan boy. The intention was kind; but the manner, as far as I could gather, was stern and injudicious. The old gentleman dwelt upon his daughter's former disobedience, and perhaps spoke unfeelingly if not exultingly of its consequences. But what roused the spirit of my mother was the reflections her visitor unaparingly cast upon her unfortunate husband. This produced such unexpected and unwonted anger and resistance from the poor widow, who declared that she would never patiently hear her deceased husband spoken of in that manner—beneath her own roof, too—no, not even by her father—that the negotiations were quickly broken off, and the visitor departed, declaring that thenceforward the inflated woman might take her own course, and that he should no longer trouble himself about her.

A week or two after this unhappy visit, I was walking on the high road, some way out of the village, and had gathered a large handful of early primroses to take home, when the sound of wheels behind caused me to look round. In another minute a high-wheeled gig, drawn by a tall powerful horse, and driven by a stout man with a red face, having much the appearance of a gentleman farmer, passed me. I looked at the stranger, and the stranger looked at me; and then he pulled up.

“What's your name?” said he.

“David Blake, sir.”

“If I didn't think so! Jump up.”

“Jump up where, sir?”

“Where? why, into the gig, to be sure. Climb up somehow, can't you?” said he, in rather a jolly, good-tempered tone.

“What for?” I wanted to know, not indisposed for a drive, but hesitating to accept the invitation.

“I'll tell you what for when you are up. No, I'll tell you now, and then you can do as you like: that is to say, I'll tell you who I am. You have heard of Tom Clayton, I suppose?”

“He's my uncle,” said I; “my mother's brother is—is—”

“Is Tom Clayton; well, I am your uncle, and

your mother's brother, and Tom Clayton all in one. So mount."

I did not hesitate any longer; throwing away the flowers, I clambered into the high gig, and was soon seated by my uncle's side.

"You are going to see mother?" said I, as my uncle whipped his horse and put him into a fast trot; but he did not seem to hear me. He was too busy, perhaps, in communing with himself, which he did in something like the following strain—the words being spoken half aloud:—

"A precious deal the best way—save a good lot of trouble—make it all right when done—lucky thing to have come upon him—have a right to do it too—natural guardian—legal, at any rate, I take it—if not, stretch a point—all for the best."

"Did you speak to me, uncle?" I asked, timidly, a little alarmed by his incoherent words, though I could scarcely have told why.

"No, David; but I'll speak to you now. You don't go to school, eh?"

"No, not now, uncle; I did before father went away last," said I.

"But you would like to go to school again, eh?"

"I shouldn't mind."

"Of course you wouldn't mind; you would like it. Well, you are going to school."

"Am I, uncle?" I asked. "But this isn't the right road, uncle," I added; for we had come to a corner where three roads met; and instead of taking that which led to our village, Uncle Tom turned sharp into the other road.

"Yes it is, David," said he; "I am going this way."

"Oh, please let me get down, then," I cried, finding some cause for alarm.

"No, no, David, sit still. I want you to go further on with me," replied my uncle, coolly, but not unkindly.

"But I don't want to go with you," said I desperately, and trying to get out of the gig, though the horse was travelling at full speed.

"If you don't sit still, I'll make you, David," said my uncle, sternly—so sternly and determinedly that I was cowed, and broke out into crying and tears.

Four or five miles further on the road was an inn. Uncle Tom pulled up there, and alighting, ordered the hostler to take out his horse and give him a feed. Then he told me to jump down, and, taking me by the hand, led me into the inn. "We may as well have dinner here, David," said he, pleasantly enough; and we were shown into a room accordingly. By this time my tears had ceased to flow; for a fancy had come into my head that my uncle was only playing me a friendly trick, and that he intended, when he had sufficiently frightened me, to turn his horse's head and take me home. Perhaps he guessed what was in my mind, for he joked about my alarm, and the trouble my mother would be in; but he supposed I could eat a good dinner for all that. And when the dinner was put on the table, my hopes so far preponderated that I handled a knife and fork as much to his satisfaction, apparently, as to my own. But I was soon to be undeceived and enlightened as to my uncle's intentions; for, dinner being over, he

asked the landlord for a sheet of writing paper, and pen and ink. Then he sat down and wrote.

"Now, David, my lad," said he, when he had written a short note, "just listen. I am going to send this letter to your mother; she'll get it in less than two hours; so you have no occasion to be in trouble about her."

"Oh, uncle; you are going to take me home, are you not?"

"No; there, don't blubber; if you do, I shall horsewhip you. Now, this is what I have written;" and then he read the following epistle, or something as near like it as I can remember:—

"Sister Charlotte—Father and I have thought it best that your boy David should go to a boarding-school, and we have come to the resolution to pay for his schooling. I was coming along to see you about it this morning, having left home yesterday for this purpose, when I happened to fall in with David himself. So, remembering what passed between you and father when he went to see you for your good, I thought the best thing would be to take the boy off at once, to save all fussing and that sort of thing. When you receive this, therefore, he will be on his way to school. I shall call and see you on my return, and then you will know where to send his clothes. You will see me tomorrow, soon after noon. I am, your affectionate brother, Tom.

"P.S. David sends his love."

"I don't send my love; I won't send it in that letter; I won't go with you—you—you old——." Please to remember my provocation, reader, and my natural boyish indignation at being kidnapped, even though it might be for my good, though that was a question I could not be expected to enter upon. I will spare the recital of my puny rebellion, however, which of course availed me nothing, and shall only say that, in less than half an hour, my uncle's letter was on its way to my mother, and that my uncle himself and his sobbing nephew were on *their* way, which lay just in the opposite direction.

#### CHAPTER VI.—SCHOOL.

GENTLE reader, I find myself in a dilemma. Mine is to be a sailor's story, and the sea is before me; but I have not yet got out of harbour, or pushed off from shore. And now, my little craft is in danger of losing another tide. The temptation is strong upon me, but I will resist it, else I could tell of my reception at school; could describe my old master, with his sandy hair and little pig-tail—his smooth, sleek, soft voice and manner, and his hard cane and other instruments of torture, and our hard and short commons. I could tell of my schoolfellows, of what they said, did, and suffered. I might enlarge upon my confident hope and expectation of being speedily followed and rescued by my mother from the schoolmaster's clutches, and upon my misery when, after a few days, my box of clothes was forwarded to the school, with a letter from my mother, saying that uncle Tom had made it all right with her, and that, though she did not approve of my having been whisked off in such a strange manner, it would be better for me to be at

school, where she hoped I would be happy, and try to learn.

I could further tell of my running away from school—of my being followed and captured—of the flogging I received for the offence—of my going home for the holidays, four times in the course of the two following years, and what happened when I was at home. All these matters must remain untold; but it is part of my necessary story to explain how I left school “for good.”

Boys at school quarrel sometimes, or they used to do so. Sometimes these quarrels arose out of the tyranny of the older and stronger over the younger and weaker. I am afraid that this evil propensity to bullying and tyranny still exists. In the days of which I am telling, schoolboys not only quarrelled, but fought. It was a point of ambition to learn to “box;” and a resort to fisty arguments was a circumstance of no rare occurrence. So much the worse, no doubt; but so it was. Thus much by way of preface.

There was one boy at school with whom I was on friendly and confidential terms, and yet he was the greatest tyrant and bully in the whole community. Perhaps it is not very creditable to my courage; but I must confess I was afraid of Peter Gorman, who was a strong-limbed, hard-headed fellow, a year or two older than myself; and that, consequently, I took care to keep on the fair side of him by frequent presents of good things, especially a luscious compound of sugar, treacle, and grease, which, under the title of “suckers,” we bought of an old woman who lived opposite the school. Being pretty liberally supplied with pocket-money by uncle Tom, who I believe was conscious that he had once in his life played me a shabby trick, I could afford to pay black-mail to Peter Gorman.

In an unfortunate day, however, I confided to Peter's bosom the story of my father and his sad fate. From that time I was in the tyrant's power. Under the threat of telling the other boys that I was the son of a blackguard smuggler (this was his expression), who had escaped being hung by dying in a hole like a beast (this was his expression too), he began to extort from me so much of the aforesaid black-mail that my patience and my purse were both alike exhausted. I told him so; and from that moment we were enemies, though, for a time, in secret.

Not for long, however. One day, Gorman drew up to me in the play-ground.

“David, I want some suckers,” said he.

“Go and buy them,” I answered, sulkily.

“Very well, hand over the money, then,” said my tormentor.

“You know very well I have not got any money of yours, Peter,” I replied, almost trembling at my assurance.

“If you don't hand over,” said he, fixing his eyes steadily upon me, “I'll tell all the boys—you know what.”

I hesitated for a moment. If I had been a few pence richer than I was just then, I should have succumbed to Peter's insolence; but my little stock of money was almost exhausted, and present

poverty made me desperate. “Tell what you like,” I shouted.

He told. He called a dozen boys around him, and I heard him disclose my secret; heard him tell, with a brutal laugh and deep malignity, that David Blake's father ought to have been hung, and would have been if he hadn't sneaked away and hid himself; that he was a *smuggler*; and that David himself was sent to school and kept there by charity.

I heard all this; and I heard the “Oh, las!” and the light laughs, and the coarser sneers which followed the bully's words; for if there were not many who loved, there were many who feared him, and who were willing enough to curry his favour by joining in the persecution on which he had entered. I heard it all then, and, for one moment, I could have hidden myself for shame, and should almost have been thankful if the earth had opened at my feet and swallowed me up. But the next moment a new spirit entered into me, and, bursting into the circle, I struck Peter a violent blow, called him a cowardly calumniator, and challenged him to fight.

It astonished me then—though I am not surprised at it now that I remember the circumstances—to see how my sudden onslaught changed the current of feeling and opinion. I was patted on the back; I heard shouts of “Well done, Davy; served him right, my boy; give it him, David!” and so on; while the young traitor (he certainly was *that*, you must acknowledge, reader) stood utterly confounded by the unexpected assault. There was no such thing as a possibility of either of us drawing back now, however; or so the boys of that generation would have said. We were both of us committed to “a stand-up fight;” but as that was not a convenient time, nor the play-ground a convenient place, for such an affair, we were parted then, and the matter was officiously and officially taken out of our hands by very willing seconds and backers, who were, no doubt, all the more eager for the coming battle because the after-aches and smarts would not be theirs.

Two days afterwards, a group of boys might have been seen on the salt marshes which half encircled the town, and stretched for a mile or more between it and the sea. Through these salt marshes wound a sluggish channel which had once been a flourishing harbour, but which at that time was half choked with mud, and only capable of admitting small colliers and other vessels of comparatively light draught. The whole place, in its melancholy aspect and almost utter uselessness, was, and I presume is, as dreary a sketch of sea-coast as can well be imagined. It suited our purpose, however, the better, that we were not likely to be interrupted; for there were no houses near, and there was no danger of interruption from benevolent passers-by. The only probable spectators of our fierce engagement were the crews of the above-mentioned vessels then lying at anchor; and they were not likely to interfere, so as to spoil the sport.

Now, I pray you, reader, do not be needlessly alarmed. I have no intention of describing a pug-



listic encounter. I have no wish to stain these pages by such a description; nor could I, if I had. In fact, I have but a slender recollection of what took place. I remember being told by my second, to "peel;" in other words, to take off my jacket; and then, of being put into position, facing my adversary. After this, it is pretty much all confusion in my mind, except that I heard encouraging shouts, coupled with the designation of "young smuggler," which I knew meant myself. I was told afterwards—as I stood blood-smeared and disfigured, and aching in all my muscles and nerves, the acknowledged victor—that the fight had lasted an hour. It might have been five hours, or five minutes. I should have equally believed either statement.

Gathered around, and witnessing the combat with approbation I am afraid, were some half-dozen sailors; and when it was over, one of them came up to me, calling me a brave fellow, insisted on shaking hands with me first, and then compelled me to take a sip from a flask he took from his pocket, and which sip, though moderate in quantity, took away my breath for a moment. He then poured some of the stuff into his hand, and bathed my swollen face with it. As he was doing this, I looked into his face and started. No wonder; for in him I saw an old acquaintance and visitor of my father.

"Edward Finn!"

"Hillo! I say, young monkey, you hail pretty saucily. Who may you be, I wonder?" said the sailor.

"Don't you know me?" I said; "you used to: I am David Blake."

Directly he heard my name, Finn's countenance changed, first to an expression of incredulity while he closely examined my features, and then to one of pleasure when he had apparently recognised me.

"Put on your jacket, boy, and come along with me," said he, cautiously; "I must have a bit of chat with you:" and then he drew me away to the bank of the channel, which was not far off; and there we seated ourselves on an old boat turned bottom upwards, while my schoolfellows were consoling or taunting my late opponent on his defeat.

### BASHIKOUAY ANTS.

In the forests of Equatorial Africa are found vast numbers of ants, some of whose tribes are so terrible to man and even to the beasts of the wood, from their venomous bites, their fierce temper and voracity, that their path is freely abandoned to them, and they may well be called lords of the forest. There are many different species of ants found in these regions, all differing widely in their choice of food, the quality of their venom, the manner of their attack, or the time of their operation. The most remarkable and most dreaded of all is the *bashikouay*. "This ant," says Mr. Du Chaillu, in his "African Travels," "also called *nchounou* by the Mpongwe, is very abundant in the whole region I have travelled over in Africa, and is the most voracious creature I ever met. It is the dread of all living animals, from the leopard to the smallest insect.

cious creature I ever met. It is the dread of all living animals, from the leopard to the smallest insect.

"I do not think that they build a nest or home of any kind. At any rate, they carry nothing away, but eat all their prey on the spot. It is their habit to march through the forests in a long regular line—a line about two inches broad and often several miles in length. All along this line are larger ants which act as officers, stand outside the ranks, and keep this singular army in order. If they come to a place where there are no trees to shelter them from the sun, whose heat they cannot bear, they immediately make underground tunnels, through which the whole army passes in columns to the forest beyond. These tunnels are four or five feet underground, and are used only in the heat of the day or during a storm.

"When they grow hungry, the long file spreads itself through the forest in a front line, and attacks and devours all it overtakes with a fury which is quite irresistible. The elephant and gorilla fly before this attack. The black men run for their lives. Every animal that lives in their line of march is chased. They seem to understand and act upon the tactics of Napoleon, and concentrate, with great speed, their heaviest forces upon the point of attack. In an incredibly short space of time the mouse, or dog, or leopard, or deer, is overwhelmed, killed, eaten, and the bare skeleton only remains.

"They seem to travel night and day. Many a time have I been awakened out of a sleep, and obliged to rush from the hut and into the water to save my life, and after all suffered intolerable agony from the bites of the advance-guard, who had got into my clothes. When they enter a house, they clear it of all living things. Cockroaches are devoured in an instant. Rats and mice spring round the room in vain. An overwhelming force of ants kills a strong rat in less than a minute, in spite of the most frantic struggles, and in less than another minute its bones are stripped. Every living thing in the house is devoured. They will not touch vegetable matter. Thus they are in reality very useful (as well as dangerous) to the negroes, who have their huts cleaned of all the abounding vermin, such as immense cockroaches and centipedes, at least several times a year.

"When on their march, the insect-world flies before them, and I have often had the approach of a *bashikouay* army heralded to me by this means. Wherever they go they make a clean sweep, even ascending to the tops of the highest trees in pursuit of their prey. Their manner of attack is an impetuous leap. Instantly the strong pincers are fastened, and they only let go when the piece gives way. At such times this little animal seems animated by a kind of fury which causes it to disregard entirely its own safety, and to seek only the conquest of its prey. The bite is very painful.

"The negroes relate that criminals were in former times exposed in the path of the *bashikouay* ants, as the most cruel manner of putting them to death.

"Two very remarkable practices of theirs remain to be related. When, on their line of march, they require to cross a narrow stream, they throw

themselves across and form a tunnel—a living tunnel—connecting two trees or high bushes on opposite sides of the little stream, whenever they can find such to facilitate the operation. This is done with great speed, and is effected by a great number of ants, each of which clings with its fore claws to its next neighbour's body or hind claws. Thus they form a high safe tubular bridge, *through* which the whole vast regiment marches in regular order. If disturbed, or if the arch is broken by the violence of some animal, they instantly attack the offender with the greatest animosity.

"The bashikouay have the sense of smell finely developed, as indeed have all the ants I know, and they are guided very much by it. They are larger than any ant we have in America, being at least half an inch long, and are armed with very powerful fore legs and sharp jaws, with which they bite. They are red or dark-brown in colour. Their numbers are so great that one does not like to enter into calculations; but I have seen one continuous line passing at a good speed a particular place for *twelve hours*. The reader may imagine for himself how many millions on millions there may have been contained here."

#### THE NEW DRAINAGE FOR LONDON.

WHOEVER has been in the habit of perambulating London and its suburbs any time for these two years past and more, can hardly fail to have encountered from time to time an obstacle to his progress of more than ordinary character. In town he has found the highways heaped with cordilleras of clay, and the footways encumbered with mountains of brick, for the half mile together; and when extending his walks beyond the remotest suburbs, he has met the same phenomena in the open fields—always attended by swarms of navvies and workers in brick and mortar, of labourers and overlookers, whom the earth swallows up and vomits forth at regular intervals, for a season of greater or less duration—and then they vanish altogether, leaving no visible sign or token of their labours. One day last summer, we came upon an army of these moles busily at work far away in the northern meadows, in the act of digging a broad burrow deep down under the bed of the New River, whose channel they had diverted for the occasion; and it was but the other day that some thousand of them were mining for a week or so, and burning bricks enough to build a new tower of Babel, at the foot of Highgate Hill; and now they have all vanished from both places alike, and left behind them no observable memorial of their doings. The same thing is going on simultaneously throughout the whole circumference, and centre too, of the modern Babylon, to the great temporary obstruction and inconvenience, there is no doubt, of the inhabitants of the districts thus summarily invaded, and as it were turned inside outwards; yet to the great final advantage, let us hope, not of them only, but of all present and future dwellers in the vast and ever-increasing metropolis.

For many years past London has been in a criti-

cal and frightful condition as it regards drainage. The Thames, which should be, and might be, flowing with waters clear as crystal and wholesome to drink—where little more than two centuries back salmon were netted within hail of Westminster Hall, and, if old Isaac Walton is to be believed, the perch and chubb were caught with rod and line in the eddies formed by the piers of old London Bridge—this once clear and limpid river has been made the common-sewer of a population mounting up towards three millions. Father Thames bore the indignity patiently for several generations; and though the filth played sad havoc with his current, and his fish got muddled first, and then died, and his pebbly bed became abominably defiled, yet he carried off the refuse as well as he was able, and made it over to the German Ocean. But there is a limit to everything; and some few years ago—the reader will recollect that it was during the dog-days—the old fellow began to put in a disclaimer against such treatment, and he did it by the sudden emission from his soupy surface of so frightful an odour as immediately proved intolerable even to the mud-larks nurtured in his embrace. People suddenly became alarmed at so violent an appeal to the universal nose on the part of the old favourite, and augured all sorts of disasters in the future. There was no mistake about it—nobody wearing a nose could imagine that: it really was a thing to be alarmed at, and all classes were alarmed. To sail on the water for pleasure while *that* lasted was not to be thought of; even to cross London Bridge on the top of an omnibus was a veritable affliction; and, as for inhaling a breeze from the river over the parapet—faugh! Tradesmen in the neighbourhood of the river had to keep their windows closed, and happy was the lodger whose "parlour was next to the sky." Folks living on the Surrey side put off visiting their friends in the city to a more convenient opportunity. Honourable members deliberating in the committee-rooms of the House of Commons were observed to turn ghastly pale and to hurry down to Bellamy's for restoratives; on one occasion the whole assembly, on the entrance of a vagabond zephyr at the open window, rushed out of the apartment pell-mell, overturning one another in their haste; and an unfortunate reporter—at least so it was reported—had to be hauled out by the legs, and carried home on a stretcher. What was to be done? Clearly, things could not be allowed to go on at this rate; but then, how was the visitation to be got rid of? That was the question. In the dilemma, science was called in; and science, in the person of the most renowned professors, went down to expostulate with Father Thames—the professors (we are merely citing their own statements in the public prints) holding their learned noses with one hand, and dipping out samples of the objectionable fluid with the other. We made a memorandum of the verdict of science at the time. Science announced with due solemnity that the waters of the river, overcharged with feculent matter, had fermented, and that, so long as the fermentation continued, its continuance would be characterized by the objectionable effluvia. Fine words these, but they buttered no parsnips, or, to

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speaking without metaphor, they did not get rid of the smell. Whether they were true we cannot say. All we know is, that if the river was in a ferment, we Londoners were in a ferment too; and the cry still was, "What is to be done?" Some recommended one thing, some another, and the daily papers were crammed with proposed remedies and panaceas. At length somebody mentioned lime as the most available of powerful disinfectants, and incontinently cartloads of lime were shot into the bosom of the Thames, somewhere about Putney Bridge, just at the turn of the tide, at the rate of some thousand or two of tons a day. Whether it was the lime that brought the old river to good behaviour, or that he left off fermenting because the city magistrates took the muzzles off the mouths of the city dogs, the dog-days having come to an end, we cannot say, but the "objectionable effluvia" mitigated their force in a few days, and since then the disinfectant has only been called for at intervals.

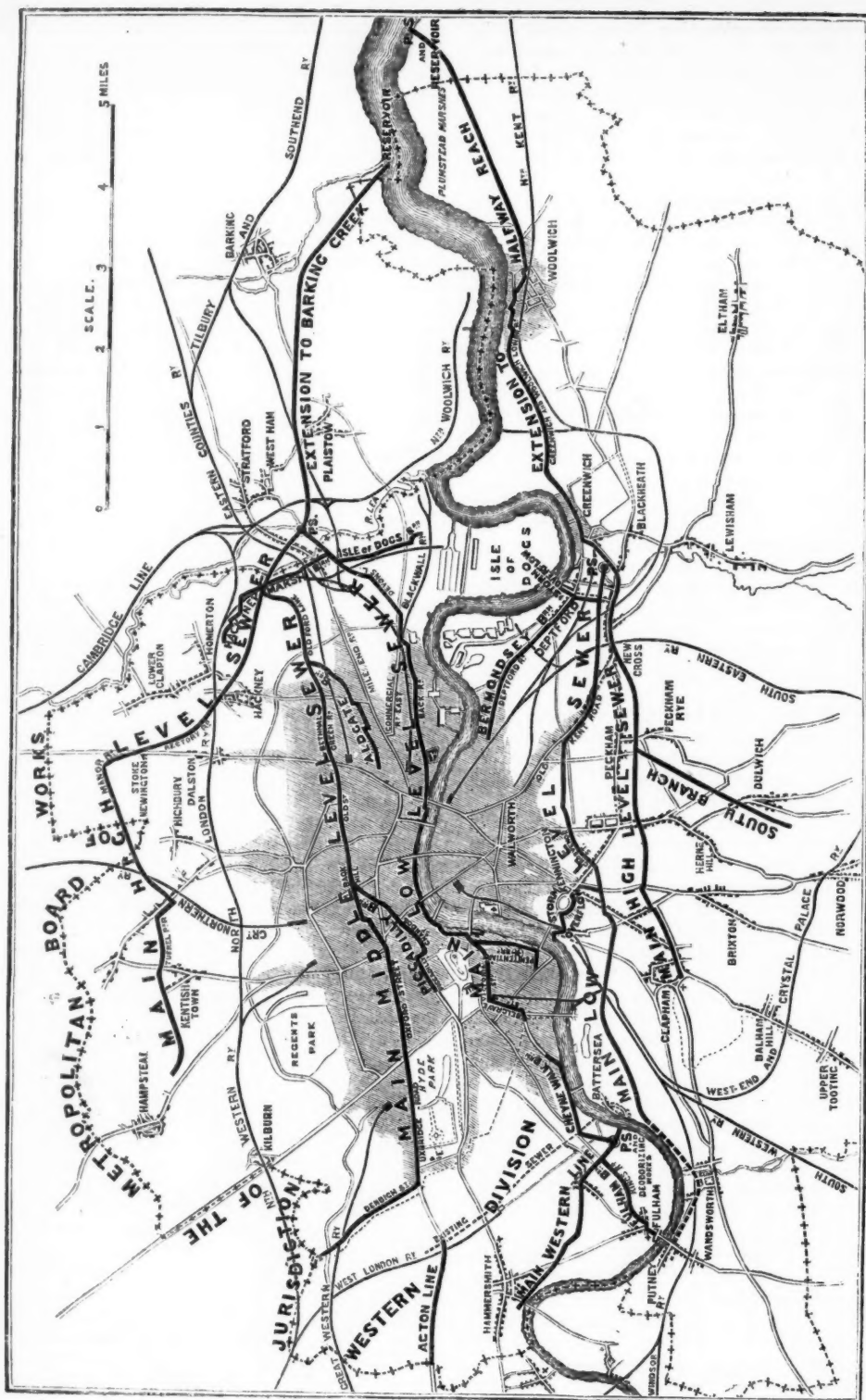
Now, we are not asserting that the above demonstration on the part of the Thames was the moving cause of the new drainage system, whatever effect it may have had in accelerating the adoption of practical measures. The system, in fact, had been in contemplation long before; and we must go back at least a quarter of a century for the first scheme for thoroughly draining the metropolis, the credit of which, we believe, belongs to the famous John Martin, the apocalyptic painter, who connected it with his grand designs for the embankment of the Thames.

The old drains have been for years incompetent to the function they have to perform; and, independent of the fact that they poisoned the river, they were a nuisance, unwholesome, dangerous, and often fatal. An enormous proportion of the ground on which London stands is so low, that the drains in connection with the houses empty themselves into the river at a level considerably below high-water mark. In some places the outfall is so low, that it is stopped by the tide for sixteen hours out of the twenty-four; in other places it is still worse, the stoppage enduring for twenty hours out of twenty-four. During all these hours of every day, the sewers in these localities are a sealed up mass of waste matter, which, accumulating with its own flow, and being forced back by the rising tide, not only sends forth poisonous blasts of the foulest air into the streets and dwellings, but frequently overflows in fluid filth into the cellars, basement-floors, and low-lying garden-grounds of densely populated districts. The health of these neighbourhoods, of course, suffers in proportion, and thousands annually sicken and die of fever and cholera, whose lives would be spared were the drainage what it ought to be. Independent, too, of these awful defects, the existing drains, owing to their being so long hermetically sealed up at their outlets, are not safe to enter. It has happened repeatedly that men who have gone down to repair them, have not come up again alive, and that others who went down to look for their companions have not come up either. In some cases, the refuse from factories or chemical works has filled the culverts with carbonic acid gas, which has been fatal to the workmen entering them, and in

others, thousand of rats have been asphyxiated from the same cause, and their bodies have been seen swarming forth at the outfall, at the ebb of the tide. There is a class of men who enter the sewers with lanterns, to rake for what they can find—taking terriers with them for protection against the rats—and remaining within the whole day, or night, as the tide compels. Some of these men have perished in their dismal prison, and their bones have been picked clean by the legions of hungry rats. Practically, however, the grand objections against the existing drainage are its inefficiency, which is most evident in rainy seasons and sudden floods, and the fact that it poisons the river, both which objections it is expected will be met by the system of drainage now in course of construction.

The carrying out of an effective system of drainage has been under the consideration of parliament at various times since the year 1848, and the present plan, the execution of which has been committed to the Metropolitan Board of Works, appears to comprise the best practical suggestions of scientific men most acquainted with the subject. From the circumstance that so large a proportion of the area of London lies so low as to be near the level of the Thames, it is impossible to drain the whole surface effectively without finding a much deeper level than the river presents. For all these low-lying districts, therefore, main sewers at a very low level are in course of construction, which will receive the drainage and carry it eastward, as far as Barking Creek on the north bank, and to Half-way Reach on the south bank of the Thames. From the low-level sewers, the soil will have to be pumped out by pumping engines, and may either be received in reservoirs for deodorization and the formation of saleable manure, or discharged into the river at a point so far from the metropolis as to leave it unpolluted. On the other hand, where the ground is sufficiently elevated to allow of it, the main sewers are constructed on levels high enough to render the drainage self-acting, so that pumping will not be necessary.

A glance at the annexed plan will give the reader an idea sufficiently accurate of the extent of the works now in course of construction. It will be seen that they provide for the whole of the area under the metropolitan jurisdiction, with an extension outside that area on the north-east to Barking Creek, and that they consist of a number of main drains at different levels. In order to secure a sufficient inclination, some of the new drains dip gradually to a depth below the main tunnels, before they join them. Where this is the case, pumping stations will be erected, and the sewage pumped up into the outfall drains, as fast as it accumulates. Provision is also made for storms and sudden falls of heavy rain, or thaws, by outlets (one at Kennington and another at Deptford) communicating with the river, and where any abnormal deluge from the clouds will discharge itself, over the ordinary flow of sewage, into the Thames. In the western division, extending, as to the river, from Queen's Road nearly to Chiswick, as the level of the ground is very low, there will be no outfall for the sewage, but the drains will converge to a point opposite



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Battersea, where deodorizing works will be established, and the fluid of the drains, after purification (?), be discharged into the Thames. We can but regard this as an undesirable part of the plan, as tending to perpetuate the defilement of the Thames.

The works were commenced at the close of the year 1858, and it was then anticipated that they might be brought to a conclusion in the course of three years. Various causes, however, such as a difficulty in obtaining materials, strikes, failures of contractors, etc., have given rise to unexpected delays, and he would be a bold speculator who should pretend to determine the precise time when the grand undertaking will be completed. Meanwhile, the contractors appear to be busy enough; and although they do work underground, they make at times appalling demonstrations of the nature of their operations. Never was such a demand for bricks made before upon the beds of London clay—one contractor alone buying them at the rate of a hundred thousand a day.

Pending all this hard work, people are speculating as to the probable result when it shall be finished. It seems doubtful whether, with the general outlet for the drainage so near as Barking Creek and a little below Woolwich, London river will be really freed from the nuisance which at times renders it intolerable. The tide may force it all back in a half-diluted state, and we may be little the better for all the money we shall have spent. The original proposition was, to carry the drainage in vast tunnels right out to sea, at a cost of ten millions sterling; but it is questionable, even if the money were forthcoming, whether that plan would answer: seawater, being so saturated with salt, will not take up other matters readily, and, as every one knows who has fallen in with a sewer which empties itself into the sea, throws off gaseous impurities into the air. The drainage of London discharging itself into the mouth of the Thames might prove a cordon the reverse of sanitary, and a terrible plague to navigators. What is wanted, if the idea of deodorizing and consolidating be abandoned, is that the sewage be conveyed into a mass of fresh water sufficient to dissipate its noxious qualities before it is borne back by the tide. Experience has shown that purification by dilution is often effected both in tidal rivers and in rivers not tidal, without any interference on the part of the dwellers on their banks. Thus, the drainage of the city of Bath is received by the Avon; but an analysis of its waters a few miles below the city differs in no important degree from the same analysis made a mile above the city, before a particle of the sewage has entered the river. The same thing was observed at Leicester, when analyses of the water drawn from the river a few miles above, and a few miles below the town, were made by a well-known professor, for scientific and sanitary ends. It would follow that, independent of anything we know or can calculate upon, there is a purifying power in Nature continually at work, which compensates the heedless recklessness of man, and keeps her machinery in order, and that, therefore, with the most moderate attention on his part to the requisitions of cleanliness, he will be preserved from harm.

### ST. MARY'S, OXFORD.

"PREACHERS at St. Mary's, on Sunday the —th. Morning, The Lord Bishop of ——. Afternoon, The Rev. M. A. ——" So runs the printed announcement which is posted in every college on the preceding Saturday; and according to the notoriety or obscurity of the preacher's name, will the beautiful University church present either a crowded congregation, or a "beggarly array of empty" benches. St. Mary's occupies a prominent position in the far-famed High Street, and is one of the finest churches to be met with anywhere. The graceful and elaborate spire, with its four subsidiary pinnacles, is one of the first objects that attracts the eye amongst the group of towers and steeples that Oxford presents; and it is hard to say whether the outside or the inside is more worthy of admiration. The University church at Cambridge (also called St. Mary's) is poor and insignificant compared with it. But "comparisons are odious," especially between sisters; and in our Oxford sketches we have refrained as much as possible from drawing them, however tempting they may be to Oxonian pride.

St. Mary's is of course a Gothic church, and in the perpendicular style; but it is disfigured on the south side by a hideous pseudo-classic porch, which must be numbered among the many misdeeds of Archbishop Laud, sometime Chancellor of the University. A like solecism has, however, been committed within a stone's-throw, by placing a beautiful Grecian erection—the Radcliffe Library—in a quadrangle formed by Gothic buildings. The genius of Oxford architecture is Gothic; and it would be easy to mention several Grecian buildings and parts of buildings, which, though fine in themselves, are instinctively felt to be out of harmony where they now stand.

The church is 180 feet long in all, and very lofty; but the organ-screen divides it nearly half-way, and the nave only is used for the University service. It accommodates about 1500; but when any well-known preacher appears, this number is largely exceeded. The galleries are set apart for undergraduates; and Masters of Arts, B.A.s, and ladies, have each their appointed region on the floor. Immediately in front of the pulpit are the state chairs of the Vice-chancellor and the Proctors, flanked by the crimson-cushioned seats of the Heads of Colleges and Halls. These potent, grave, and reverend seignors had a narrow escape not long ago. An explosion of gas occurred just beneath their seats one Saturday evening; and, had it happened only a few hours later, there would have been a heavy list of killed and wounded, for it blew the solid woodwork to pieces.

Suppose, then, we make up our mind to hear the annual Bampton Lectures, or one of the Bishop of Oxford's telling attacks on the pernicious "Essays and Reviews." We go early, and before the deep-toned bell has well begun (Oxford is famous for its bells), we find the church already filling. One by one, various college celebrities come in, till the M.A. benches are gradually filled with a compact mass of cultivated intellect, and show an

audience critical and formidable enough to make any preacher uneasy whose nerves are not of the strongest. Men of all varieties of opinion are there, men whose names are household words among us, and some of even European reputation. By the time the organ begins, the gentle prelude which announces the Vice-chancellor's arrival, the place is filled to overflowing with an expectant crowd, and many late comers have to stand the whole time. Suddenly the organ puts forth its full power, the congregation rises *en masse*, and the procession of Heads of Houses makes its appearance from a side chapel, preceded by several mace-bearers. Of course, there are some notable exceptions, but on the whole they are a venerable and fine-looking body of men; and amidst the sombre array of black gowns, the scarlet of their doctors' robes\* makes a gallant show as they slowly file off to their respective seats in their order of seniority. It affords a bit of positive colour to relieve the eye; which also, be it remarked in passing, is an advantage of the crimson in the Oxford Master's hood. At their head walk the Vice-chancellor and the preacher of the day, who exchange a solemn bow when their paths at length diverge. The latter proceeds at once to the pulpit, and the congregation immediately strikes up a hymn. A heart-stirring volume of sound, like the voice of many waters, rolls through the aisles as this great assembly of men lifts up its voice; and then the preacher reads what is called the Bidding Prayer. This in truth is no prayer at all, but rather a long enumeration of subjects for prayer and for thanksgiving, among which last are included the names of sundry "founders and benefactors." This done, he begins his sermon, which is rarely less than an hour long. The great mass of gownsmen then disperse, having previously attended the prayers in their own college chapel, and leave a small parochial congregation to remain behind for the morning prayers. Some colleges have sermons of their own at the evening chapel service.

On certain days in the year, the University sermons are delivered in particular college chapels; and whenever a canon of Christchurch is selected to preach, the service always takes place in the Cathedral. At the beginning of each term there is a Latin litany and sermon. To St. Mary's go the judges in state at the opening of the half-yearly assizes; and on these occasions they both contrive to squeeze themselves simultaneously in full costume into the Vice-chancellor's seat, which has a somewhat ludicrous effect. The Mayor and corporation have a civic procession every Sunday to Carfax church.

Some men appear constrained and ill at ease in preaching before the University, apparently from the impression that in addressing such an audience they ought to depart from their accustomed style. They are accordingly too apt to get on stilts. Extempore preachers, for instance, generally think it necessary to bring a manuscript, and are evidently hampered by the unwonted clog. So much was

this felt by the late amiable Bishop Villiers of Durham, that when preaching in St. Mary's some ten years ago, he suddenly shut up his MS. before he had got half through it, and—to the manifest relief both of himself and his hearers—finished his sermon in his own free and energetic style.

As one strolls back to college afterwards with one's fellow gownsmen, it is equally instructive and amusing to listen to the comments on the discourse which are freely exchanged on all sides. Some of these are very outspoken, and by no means flattering, though they often hit the right nail on the head. "Why, any heathen might have preached that sermon," was the remark called forth a few years ago from an indignant auditor. That same sermon, in the form of an essay by the Head Master of Rugby, on the "Education of the World," has since caused not a little astonishment and pain to the people of England.

### WESTON-SUPER-MARE,

AND OTHER SOMERSETSHIRE WATERING-PLACES.

In a recent paper we gave an account of a trip to the South Devonshire coast. We now introduce to the notice of our readers some of the marine resorts in Somersetshire—Portishead, Clevedon, Weston-super-Mare, and Burnham. All four lie on the Bristol Channel; but two of these, though much commended in the local guide-books, would probably disappoint. We cannot recommend either Portishead or Burnham for marine excursionists. There is an ample expanse of water before either of them. Portishead lies a mile or two from the mouth of the Avon, and the Channel is there at least five miles wide; but, unfortunately, the upper part of the Bristol Channel is much of the colour of the Thames at London Bridge. We will not call it liquid mud, but it is as remote as possible from clear blue water. Colour is indeed substance for all purposes of delight; and this delight is quite denied to us at Portishead. In all other respects there is much animation in the view. A crowd of vessels are always making for the mouth of the Avon, or departing from it; the opposite Monmouthshire hills are bold and striking, and at Portishead itself there is beautiful scenery. The landing-place is in a small creek at the side of a wooded hill, which projects into the sea. Embosomed in the midst of it is the hotel, with charmingly secluded and sylvan walks about it, and steps cut in the rock down to the landing-place of the steamers. Excellent lodgings are to be obtained half a mile distant, but with no sea-view. The village, a very picturesque one, lies inland a mile or more from the landing, beautifully embowered. The only drawback to this place is the un-sea-like aspect of the water. Altogether, Portishead may be a delightful retreat for Bristolians, but will not do for those who come from a distance, and want real sea.

Neither can we recommend Burnham, which, to one looking cursorily at a map, might seem to promise every marine advantage; for it lies in the innermost recess of Bridgewater Bay, thirty miles lower

\* These scarlet gowns are worn at Oxford on all official occasions, and on every Sunday morning at St. Mary's throughout the year, excepting in Lent, when they appear in the afternoon.

down the Channel, which is there nearly twenty miles broad. It has also a fine sandy beach; but unfortunately there is a wide extent of shoal ground opposite the town, four miles of which is left uncovered at low water, when one can only see the muddy river Parret flowing past the town, carrying out its thick deposit from the rich alluvial soil of the adjacent country. To be thus disappointed of what one came for, during the fast fleeting hours of a short excursion, is an intolerable bore. Nor are the land views at all inspiring. Turn where you may, you can see only the *levels*, as they are called, or vast alluvial flats—a great plain of 200 square miles, invaluable for grazing land, invaluable for fattening bullocks, but not very pleasing to the excursionist, or one who, satiated with tame scenery, is gasping for the invigorating air of the hills. Not that a level like this,

“Where the view  
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be.”

is without its beauty and its poetry; it has a character of its own. The tract in question is, moreover, profusely studded with flowers, while its monotony is broken by solitary peaks and knolls, rising steep and abrupt from the plain, and as it were islanded in its midst. Such is Brent Knoll, about three miles from Burnham, and which rises 1000 feet above the sea.

There are, however, two places on this coast which are very eligible—Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon. That Weston has some powerful charms may be inferred from the fact that the census of 1861 proves it to have doubled its population in the last ten years, which is now 9000. In 1811, it was only 163. We advise a visitor not to be daunted by the first aspect. In regard to places, however it may be in regard to persons, first impressions are very deceptive. Nearly every place disappoints at first. Wordsworth well illustrates this truth in his “Yarrow Unvisited.” In regard to places which we have longed to see, “we have a vision in our hearts” which the first contact with reality often dispels. One arriving at Weston on a dull day and when the tide was out, leaving an ample expanse of mud, might exclaim, “All is barren here; let us go somewhere else.” But Weston has substantial claims, as he will find, if he sees it in all weathers, and explores the neighbourhood. It is seated in a capacious bay, about three miles across from horn to horn. At its northern boundary, Anchor Head projects into the sea, a rugged headland of gray rock, forming the extreme point of Worle Hill, the altitude of which is 306 feet, and which extends three miles in length, but little more than a furlong in breadth. This hill, besides screening Weston from the north and north-easterly winds, affords the most charming walks and the most expansive views. It is well wooded, principally with fir, and, being of a dry and rocky soil, is available at all times for the pedestrian. Equestrian parties are sometimes to be seen threading its grassy paths. The Weston name for this hill is “The Woods.” The most delightful glimpses of the sea are obtainable through the trees, which, as seen here, is of a good blue colour, for the eye looks at once into mid-channel and deep water, and escapes the muddy

shoals in shore. The Bristol Channel is here only eight miles wide, so that, gazing directly across, the Welsh coast is clearly defined, and in fine weather the white cottages are distinctly visible. Worle Hill is so close to the town that it is a constant resource. Every variety of walk may here be found: one of the most delightful is that along the sea-front of the hill. In the foreground, the green of the fir among the dark rocks of limestone is finely picturesque. Looking landwards from the apex of the hill, one commands a view of the Quantock hills, the Mendip range, and the heights above Clifton. On the side of Anchor Head, on a rock called Knightstone, there is a group of lodging-houses and baths. But Worle Hill is so close to Weston, that it is accessible within a very easy walk from every part of it. There is also a carriage drive cut along the slant of the hill, and leading through the most sequestered retreats of “The Woods,” and though not open of right to the public, the use of it is conceded.

When we were at Weston, we never failed every morning to mount this hill, to walk along the sea face of it, and to penetrate its sylvan glades. But there are also many open spaces on it: such is the British camp on the summit, with the remains of its ramparts, inclosing some twenty acres. While taking the air on these heights, the eye sweeps over a glorious panorama of sea and land: we were never weary of admiring it.

We have hitherto only spoken of the northern boundary of Weston Bay, consisting of the long insulated hill range we have described; we now descend to the town itself. A gay row of houses, each fronted with a long strip of garden, faces the sea. The chief hotel of the place has the same aspect, and that about s.s.w. Crescents, villas, and all the gay variety of tempting sea-shore abodes, are to be found here. A gently curved beach, upwards of two miles in extent, terminates at one horn of the bay in Worle Hill, and at the other in Brean Down, a high downy upland, and clothed with heath plants. Thus Weston Bay is well defined, and has a remarkably snug aspect. Cardiff is right opposite, but mid-channel there are two islands—Steeple Holmes and Flat Holmes. The former is a good place for a boat excursion. There is an excellent landing-place in a snug cove, though all around there are nothing but sheer precipitous cliffs. There is a lighthouse, a farm-house, and even lodgings to be let; and, of course, boats for hire. A week's sojourn on this islet, in happy oblivion of newspapers, and all the jarring world beyond, would be very enjoyable.

There is an islet close in shore and opposite to the Parade, called Birnbeck. It is accessible by means of a causeway of pebbles, for about two hours, at low water; but many persons have been lost in a vain attempt to return. The distance to the mainland is so short, and they walk over so easily in a very few minutes, that they delay too long. The influx of the tide here is marvellously rapid; and many have been the victims to this optical illusion. The tide seems far out, and presently, when half across on their return, they are overwhelmed by it. Thus perished two brothers





of his military and political services; throughout all he was respected and honoured; when he died, the universal regret was only mitigated by the reflection that he nobly fulfilled his allotted task, leaving a memory to

"Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

In person, Sir John Malcolm was of such presence as gives the world assurance of a man. In manner, he was frank, open, and cordial. Brave in battle, sage in council, prompt and decisive in action, he was in private life and society one of the most unaffected and agreeable of companions. His good humour was an unceasing fountain, and it was a delight to spend an hour with him, in which he would, in quick transition, pass from instructive lessons of wisdom and experience on the gravest subjects to the playfulness of a child. His was, indeed, a happy constitution, powerful and gentle, manly and unassuming, rich in intellectual endowments, yet sparkling with natural talent.

The sons of a small Scottish laird and farmer, John and Pulteney Malcolm (the gallant admiral to whose brilliant exploits his grateful country bears testimony by a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral), were born at Burnfoot, their father's residence, in a rural and semi-wild district near Langholme on the border, among men of pleasant Teriotdale, as pacific now as if their ancestors had never listened to the bugle horn, or heard the fearful war-cry or slogan of the unsparing foray. Yet there is something in blood, something in tradition. The ethnologist may easily trace the ancient spirit of the race in many of their descendants; and it is curious to remark, even in our own time, the number of heroic names that are descended from the turbulent occupants of the debateable land. As mere boys, the brothers were sent forth, like many of their compatriots, to seek their fortune, Pulteney in the navy, and John, at the age of fourteen, to India. As mine are simply light personal sketches, and not biographies,\* I will not enter upon any description of his assiduous acquisition of the languages of the east, and especially of the Persian, which brought him early into public notice; nor of his military career, commencing with the siege of Seringapatam, when he was barely of age, and so continuing as to receive the marked approbation of two Governors-General, Lords Cornwallis and Hastings. Ill health brought him home; but twice again he revisited India in important capacities, and twice he was sent as ambassador to Persia, where he overcame great obstacles by his personal influence and tact, and ultimately concluded a mutually beneficial treaty with the Shah. His judgment was eminently successful in dealing with Scindia and Holkar, when the daring Pindarees threatened our empire; and when the danger took a tangible form, his abilities and gallantry bore the conflict through to a victorious issue. His last mission was as Governor of Bombay, where he organized many great improvements; and full of triumph in every department of the state, and after more than thirty years spent in incessant labour of the most exhaustive nature, military, civil, political, literary, and legis-

lative, he returned to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate* in his native land, where I had intense gratification in renewing my former intimacy with so justly celebrated and esteemed a character.

Like all truly great men, Sir John Malcolm was simple and unaffected—I would add, and straightforward, although there are so many instances of men considered by the world to be very great, who are nevertheless remarkable for cunning reserve and secret machinations. Be this as it may, he was upright, open-hearted, social, friendly, firm without a semblance of obstinacy, and kindly in all private relations, without the least demonstration of over-sensitiveness or display.

I think it was at the time of his second return from India, that he and his brother, both covered with renown, and their fame ringing throughout the realm, journeyed together to see the Burnfoot braes, where their childhood's steps had trodden in "auld lang syne."

We twa hae paddled in the burn,  
And pu'd the gowans fine,  
And mony a sea between us row'd  
Sin' auld lang syne.

The thought, if not the words, of the song was no doubt in their heads and hearts as they posted down the rough road near Langholme. It was a lovely summer afternoon; and it so happened that, on coming in sight of their native home, they observed two of their elder female relatives sitting in front of the door, drowsing in the soft sunshine, and knitting away with true housewife industry. It was too much for the feelings of the excited travellers; the bridge was a mile off, and so they leaped from the chaise and dashed through the water; accoutred as they were, they plunged in, and were in a few moments hugging their dear aunts, as if it were impossible to love them too much. This was the one touch of nature; after all their toils, dangers, and doings with mankind, it was a single trait, but suggests a charming point for a complete portrait. I recollect the anecdote being laughingly told one day, when Sir John was accidentally wetted in a careless manner. Instead of being annoyed (as most people would have been), he forgot the sousing, turned the story into a joke anent a brother officer, who came back to Edinburgh after twenty years, and on mounting to his residence, a *flat*, found his two aunts seated at a game of draughts, just as he had left them at his departure, and to whom his first greeting was, "What! have not you finished that game yet?" Such jocular pleasantries were always ready with Sir John, (as curious anecdotic illustrations were with Sir Walter Scott, quotations from Greek authors, Shakespeare, or Porson, remembrances of prodigious reading with Macintosh, and something of a similar kind with Macaulay,) and intermingled with his strong sense and large acquaintance with men and things; such it was that made his conversation so delectable and his society altogether so replete with graceful entertainment and deep interest. There is something inexpressibly pleasing in the familiar relaxations of great authors, poets, statesmen, or other historical celebrities: their bending to our common pastimes, and in fact their own real enjoyment of them, their easy compliance with the requirements

\* The Life and Correspondence of Sir John was published by Mr. Kaye, a few years ago.

of the passing hour, their condescending, as it were, to be one of us, raise us up in self-gratification towards their level, and, far from lowering them, enhance our feeling and teach us to love as well as to admire.

If we now, after the lapse of so many years, refer to his writings, we must not only acknowledge how important they were at the time, but how valuable they still are for the information they afford, and will be for generations to come. His *Life of Lord Clive*, which formed the basis of Macaulay's splendid review in the "Edinburgh," is a standard biography of an extraordinary man, who dispelled the awful black-clouded crisis like a lightning flash, overthrew every secret conspiracy and powerful aggression, and, by the sheer force of his genius, saved or rather created a mighty empire. In his steps Malcolm trod, and in a field scarcely less important; he saved the Mysore, crushed the most dangerous native combinations, and closed the route to Indian invasion through Persia, which must have entailed a war of greater peril and much longer duration. The population of Malwa, and the organization and government of that singular nation the Sikhs, were first made known to us by his pen; and his sketches of Persia, like his *viva voce* descriptions, are picturesque and animated, as if his whole life had been devoted to the cultivation of "polite literature."

Courted by the best society in London, esteemed and respected by all who knew him, decorated and exalted by his sovereign, and honoured by his country, Sir John Malcolm barely reached his grand climacteric when his health gave way; the wear and tear of responsible duties, and the sapping of climate, had exhausted the system of the strong and fine-looking Scotch hero. Only a few weeks before his death I saw him, but alas!—*quantum mutatus ab illo Heclore*—it was a painful interview, and nearly thirty years have since passed without abating my sincere regret. The consolation now, as then, which alone can mitigate the public loss, is found in the reflection that, throughout a long and critical period, he served his country zealously, faithfully, and successfully; that he reaped such reward as was due to his merits; enjoyed a season (too brief, indeed) of sunny repose from his labours; and died in peace and resignation, mourned by his friends and lamented by all.

#### A GOSSIP ABOUT CANARIES.

BY W. KIDD, AUTHOR OF "NATURAL HISTORY OF SONG BIRDS."

WE have had a gossip about birds in a garden. Now for a gossip about birds in confinement—premising that the canary is a lawful captive, ever happy, in or out of his cage. All birds, as I shall hereafter show, are *not* lawful captives.

So many and so various are the books and treatises on the subject of birds and bird-keeping, that people are really puzzled which of them to choose, and which of them to believe. They are, for the most part, mere compilations from publications quite out of date, and anything but practical. What I write has the merit at least of being wholly original, the result of more than thirty years' close

observation. I have recorded only what I have myself seen and really know.

A delightful companion is a little bird; intelligent, cheerful, good-tempered, and affectionate. But in order thoroughly to appreciate his good qualities, it is needful to secure his heart and confidence. Nothing is more easy, particularly if he be young. Let us imagine that some kind friend has presented us with a canary. We will take our first lesson at once.

Instead of sending him up-stairs or down-stairs, anywhere to get him out of the way, at once make a guest and companion of him. Where *you* are, there let *him* be. Talk to him, sing to him, whistle to him, dance to him. The more playful *you* are, the more playful and merry will he be. A week ought to suffice to tame any bird. At the end of that time, he should be able to dance a jig. All depends, however, upon the natural disposition of his master or mistress. Birds have no sympathy with a cold disposition. That is the simple reason for so many ineffectual attempts to tame them. From their birds, or from their servants, you may fairly judge a whole family.

Excellent and frequent opportunities are afforded me, particularly in the provinces, for observing the magical power of affection over the feathered tribes. Not long since, a lady who attended one of my evening lectures at Birmingham, gave me a special invitation to her house, wishing, as she expressed it, to introduce me to her "happy family." She had been delighted, as I afterwards learnt, by the freshness of my anecdotes about birds. Never shall I forget her entrance. The drawing-room door opened, and in she walked, her countenance radiant with smiles. Seated on the first finger of her right hand was one of the "happy family" before alluded to. It was a canary. "What a loving pair," thought I, as I witnessed the endearments that passed between them. It is not needful to recount the exploits of this little pet. Suffice it to say, it was destitute of all fear, and as tame as any bird possibly could be; singing sweetly all the while it was biting its fair mistress's lip. This was one only out of a round dozen other tame feathered pets. These, before taking my leave, I put through some marvellously curious exercises, to the intense amazement and delight of the master, the mistress, and the maid. All were present to see the fun. Birds are never so pleased as when they are noticed and played with. True physiognomists are they: they intuitively know who loves them.

It has been objected to me, that some birds are naturally more shy than others, and more difficult to tame. It is quite true. The best way of meeting the difficulty is, to pay the little neglected creatures double attention; to feed them in person, and never to trust them to the care of a stranger. They then get used to you, watch for your footstep, and are not happy unless when in your society.

The next thing is, to keep your birds in health. This can be done only by extreme cleanliness, and a proper attention to food. Every morning the perches should be cleansed, by means of a piece of flannel. Use warm water and Windsor soap. This prevents the birds' feet being clogged up by

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dirt. His tray, too, should be fresh sanded daily, the sand not being finely but coarsely sifted. The small pebbles, bear in mind, are swallowed, and, passing into the gizzard, they aid digestion. Clean water, twice daily, is needful; and it should be given from the outside. Never introduce food or water into the cage. The water always gets fouled, and there is danger of its poisoning the inmate. The bath, too, must be suspended on the cage door, outside. Remove it when done with, and fasten the door. See that the seed is all of the best. Procure it of a wholesale dealer, and you will be safe. Cleanse it every morning from the husk, and sift from it all particles of dust, grit, and other impurities. Let the perches be square, not round; rough, and of a tolerable thickness. The small round perches generally in use are a great mistake, and punish birds' feet terribly.

Now for the cage. That is a subject requiring great consideration. Birds in confinement must have plenty of room. Air, light, and exercise, are essential to their comfort as well as health. Whatever, therefore, be the form of your cage—and all people, of course, have a fancy to gratify—see that it be spacious, and the wire of zinc. The fewer perches the better. Have it well made, and let all the feeding utensils be of glass. Discard tin altogether; also the globular side glasses with holes in their centre. Oblong vessels of glass, fitted into mahogany boxes, are what I have long since introduced, and find generally approved of. Those who really love their birds could not do better than provide them with a palace of glass. In connection with a very clever workman at Birmingham (Mr. Careless, 1, Belle Vue Place, Lady Wood Lane), I have recently brought before the public a glass cage, called the "fairy bird-cage." So great is its beauty, that it won its way at once to Buckingham Palace, and is now honoured with a place on the table of England's beloved Queen.

The "fairy bird-cage" is constructed almost entirely of the purest crystal glass; and it can be made of any required dimensions. It is very strong, and, with common care, not liable to accident. It also insures extreme cleanliness and comfort. The bars, though apparently light, are of solid glass; and between them, at their bases, are introduced no fewer than thirty-two moveable prismatic elegancies in glass. These require, of course, personal inspection and attention. They are easily kept bright by the application of a soft piece of wash-leather and a fine glass-cloth. It forms, indeed, an elegant amusement.

The unique appearance of this ornithological palace, when suspended in a well-lighted drawing-room, can be but faintly imagined. It is then that its illuminated pillars, pyramids, pediments, and other prismatic ornaments, come into full play. Whether by day or night, viewed in the sun or by candlelight, the effects are startling. Sparkling gems meet the eye at every turn.

Nor can the immense conceit and ridiculous importance of the inmates of this fairy palace be more than guessed at. Lovebirds, Australian paroquets, Java sparrows, canaries, bullfinches, goldfinches—indeed any birds of striking plumage—are here

quite "at home," and are seen to an advantage never before attainable. Wire has ever been a sad enemy to birds. The cost, though apparently high, is by no means alarming, while the advantages obtained are great. In houses where extravagant sums are often paid for mere ornaments, a fair price should not be grudged for what will be useful as well as attractive.\*

By placing your birds in a showy cage, you naturally direct attention to them. Whilst admiring the cage, the bird itself becomes an object of interest to your visitors. This makes your pets familiar and cheerful. You have now to teach them all sorts of funny tricks, which they will be as delighted to learn. A nod of your head, an arch look from your eye, or a grotesque movement of your body, as if dancing to them, will set them off immediately. Place a glass bottle filled with hempseed on the table; also, some ripe groundsel, chickweed, or lettuce: the bath, of course; they are nothing without this. Then begin talking and attitudinizing, mysteriously wondering, *sotto voce*, "who all these nice things can be for." You will be quickly answered, and by such a rapid succession of funny notes! And there will be such a dancing and jiggling, such a stretching out of glossy necks! No gravity could withstand it. Of course you will look up, and pretend to be astonished at such a noise. Then you will commence questioning each expectant pensioner, and presently offer, incidentally, some little delicacy from your lip. Never keep these delicacies in the cages. If you do, all the amusement I speak of is lost. I hardly need say that hempseed should be given only as a treat. Though birds are remarkably fond of it, too much does them serious injury. A few seeds now and then, as a luxury, are allowable. These, and all other dainties, should be set in the distant landscape.

I am no advocate for children handling their birds, as they too often do. It is a bad practice. Many a pet gets killed by the excessive kindness of a thoughtless child, and from an undue pressure on its body. A hot hand is fatal to their delicate structure. Still, birds do love to be handled, kissed, and fondled. Were mine neglected in this matter, I should never hear the last of it. The rogues look for me every morning. There they are, waiting to be laid on their backs in my open hand, to have their chins tickled, and to receive a loving poke in the ribs. How archly-defiant they look! And how completely they have everything their own way! Speaking eyes, and musical voices, proclaim how happy they are.

Those who are in the secret, and know how to handle their birds, will quite understand what I have been relating. I would observe that habit alone can teach the art—for such it is—of holding a bird safely, and at the same time allowing him perfect freedom of action. Once acquired—and it is easily learnt—you can do what you will with your little friend. You can soak his feet in warm water—a rare luxury—trim his claws when unduly long,

\* A handsome glass cage may be had for three guineas. Larger and more elaborate patterns are charged in proportion.

cut his upper mandible should it project beyond the lower one, etc., etc. He is yours. You may do just what you will with him.

During the warm season, you will of course have your pet as much as possible *in the garden*. Place him in the centre of some over-arching bower of roses or jessamine. Here, suspended from the semi-circle by an iron hook, he will see you as well as hear you. You may then put him through his exercise, either by the voice, finger, or foot. The further you are from him, the better the fun. He will sing all the louder, and dance all the more grotesquely. Should there be a number of birds in the family, keep them remotely distant from each other when in the garden.

All cage-birds love their liberty; that is, they like to feel free. Be sure, therefore, at breakfast-time, to open the doors of their dwellings. They will soon come out, and make themselves perfectly at home with you. It is for you to make them love you. I am exceedingly puzzled to receive so many letters as I do, especially from the fair sex, asking how they shall tame their birds. Gentle creatures! you must have too mean an opinion of yourselves to imagine there can be any difficulty in the matter. Women, birds, flowers—why, they are naturally associated.

It is now time to close this chapter of Canary Gossip. It is merely suggestive, by no means exhaustive. I offer it to the younger readers of "The Leisure Hour," in the hope that it may be a stepping-stone to many hours of innocent enjoyment.



THE CRYSTAL BIRD-CAGE.

## VARIETIES.

**REMAINS OF LOST CHAMOUNIX GUIDES.**—The British consul at Geneva has reported an interesting fact in a letter from Chamouni, dated the 15th of August. Some of our readers will remember the tragic end of Auguste Tairaz, Pierre Balmat, and Pierre Carrier, the three Chamounix guides, who were swept from the Grand Plateau by an avalanche, on the 20th of August, 1820, while making, or attempting, the ascent of Mont Blanc with Dr. Hamel and some Genevese gentlemen. No traces whatever of these poor fellows had ever been discovered, from the moment of their destruction till the morning of the 15th, when various fragments were found on the lower part of the Glacier des Bossons entering the valley. The circumstance caused the most intense excitement in the village of Chamounix and the whole valley. Professor J. Forbes had repeatedly told the Chamounix guides that they might look out for traces of their deceased comrades in the Lower Bossons in about forty or forty-five years after the catastrophe; he told Auguste Balmat in 1858 to keep a look-out. The consul says:—"I have just returned from the 'Mayor's Court-room,' where a *procès verbal* of the whole occurrence has been drawn up. I have suggested to his worship the preservation of some portions of the relics in spirits. What the glacier has retained forty odd years perfectly preserved, will putrefy in as many hours in the valley below."

**LOSS OF THE "BIRKENHEAD" STEAMER.**—A handsome memorial tablet has been erected in the great corridor near the south entrance to the chapel at Chelsea Hospital, in honour of the brave and self-denying heroes who perished in the "Birkenhead." The following is the inscription:—"This monument is erected by command of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, to record the heroic constancy and unbroken discipline shown by Lieut. Col. Seaton, 74th Highlanders, and the troops embarked under his command on board the 'Birkenhead,' when that vessel was wrecked off the Cape of Good Hope, on the 26th February, 1852, and to preserve the memory of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, who perished on that occasion. Their names are as follow (in all, 357 officers and men.)" The names of all the men are inscribed on brass tablets beneath the polished granite monument bearing the above inscription. It will be remembered that the troops, consisting of detachments of many different regiments, remained in unbroken rank on deck till the ship went down, in order to allow the women and children to embark without disorder in the boats. Count Montalembert and the late General Sir William Napier have described the scene in terms of glowing eloquence, affirming that the annals of ancient or modern times afford no instance of nobler heroism.

**BAZAAR BRIDGES.**—Mr. Alcock, M.P. for East Surrey, suggests the construction of additional bridges across the Thames for foot-passengers, with shops, by the rent of which the expenses would be amply paid. The cost of the New Westminster and New Blackfriars Bridges is at the rate of £3 5s. per foot, or £141,000 an acre; of Chelsea Suspension Bridge, £2 5s. per foot, or £98,000 an acre; of New Lambeth Suspension Bridge, £1 10s. or £65,000 an acre; giving an average of bridge communication at £101,000 per acre. A bridge at a cost of £2 per foot, 1000 feet long, and 30 wide, with shops or stalls and glazed roof, and 14 feet of clear pathway, could be constructed for £60,000. If 250 shops paid a rent of £50 each per annum, the revenue would be £12,500, yielding a profit of above 20 per cent. or, at £30 rental, £7500 or 12½ per cent on the total outlay.

**VALUE OF LAND IN LONDON.**—The Excise Office in Broad Street was sold at the rate of £88,000 an acre; the India House in Leadenhall Street at the rate of £124,000 an acre; and some land, as approaches to new Westminster Bridge, at £127,000 an acre; thus giving an average of £113,000 an acre. The value of land in central London may therefore be reckoned at above £100,000 per acre.